

Honorable Mention **Laws of Life Essay**

by
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Among the many things that Raymond taught me, the most important things were never to judge people, never to tease people, and to always help people when they need it. Raymond was your average, All-American "nerd". He wore strange clothes, talked very properly, and never, not once, did he do something that would be considered bad. He always came to class with high spirits, but no one was ever nice to him.

I walked into class, and there was Raymond, smiling like he always did. Some kids were giving him bunny ears, but he didn't notice, or at least he was doing a good job at ignoring them. I almost felt sorry for him, but it's hard when he's such a geek. There were only two open seats, one next to Raymond, and one next to Bob, a bully. I sat down next to Bob, thinking that he wouldn't bother me in class. By now, everyone was pelting Raymond with spitballs. I wanted to, but I couldn't bring myself to tell them to stop, because of how dumb it would look. Finally, we heard the familiar clip-clop of our teacher's shoes, and everybody tried to look as angelic as possible. She told us to get ready for the spelling test.

As I was numbering my paper, Bob flicked the back of my head and said, "I sure hope you studied, because I don't waste my time when I can just copy." I guess Raymond had heard Bob, because he had this fiery look in his eyes.

"That's cheating," I said, trying to sound confident. The test started, and I knew I only had until lunchtime to live. I hadn't studied at all. The words were foreign to me. I knew I, and Bob, had failed the test.

After we had graded the test, Bob once again flicked the back of my head and said, "See you at lunchtime. Hope you enjoy your last meal!" Luckily for him, the teacher hadn't heard what he said, and he leaned back in his chair laughing. Raymond had that evil look again, and it was giving me the heebie-jeebies.

Finally, my death bells rang, and then Raymond did something very strange. He walked over to my desk and said, "Come on, we've got work to do." Confused and reluctant, I followed. He was leading me straight to my death. I saw Bob, and he made eye contact with me and sneered.

Raymond stopped right in front of Bob and said, "Ben has something to say."

"What the heck to you thank you're doing!" I hissed in his ear.

"I think what Ben was going to say was that you need to do your own work. You need to be independent." said Raymond.

"Huh?! snorted Bob.

"Chew your own food!" yelled Raymond, and with that, he walked off to an empty table. While Bob tried to work out what he had just been told, I decided to follow Raymond.

"Hey, why'd you stick up for me?" I asked Raymond.

He replied, "Well, you were in trouble, so I thought I should help."

"What about all those times I made fun of you?" I asked.

"People change," he said. And then I realized why he was so different from everybody else. It was his optimistic attitude. I asked him if he would like to come over sometime, and that was the beginning of a very good friendship.

As I said before Raymond taught me many things. But the ones I treasure most are these: Never judge people with out getting to know them first, they could turn out completely different then you expected, or at least Raymond did. Never make fun of people, it scars them (and you) for life. I know I felt terrible after I remembered how many times I had been mean to Raymond. And finally, always help people when they need it. Raymond helped me even though I had been mean to him in the past. If you follow these rules, you're sure to lead a happy life.